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corresp - Barrett-Connor

CONFIDENTIAL

September 14, 1988

9/15/88
✓ Paul Shullenberger
Assistant Director, MacArthur Fellows Program
John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation
Suite 700
140 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60603

Dear Dr Shullenberger:

I've returned from a summer of extensive travels to find your July 21 letter concerning the nomination of Elizabeth Barrett-Connor. I am happy to reply.

The nominator shows a detailed and comprehensive understanding of Barrett-Connor's work and contributions. He or she emphasizes its originality, the variety of questions and the "edge of the wave" attributes. It does not mention that she is extremely skilled in applying epidemiological thinking to major public health issues.

There is no question that she has achieved more than most people in this field of quality and productivity. She certainly qualifies among the top epidemiologists in the country. Dr Barrett-Connor is likely to continue to achieve sound empirical research, useful syntheses and reviews and provocative, sometimes cantankerous editorials. I can't imagine that her productivity would be significantly influenced, with or without a fellowship. However, the nominator appears to have firsthand knowledge of constraints that might be relieved by a MacArthur Fellowship. I don't understand them because I doubt that she can desert her department, her school and her family in order to increase her productivity, which would be difficult to improve. Nevertheless, if the main purpose of the Fellowship is to encourage creativity, including the investment in risky ideas, I can't imagine a better candidate. She effectively combines sound theory, sound research methods, original thinking and high productivity. She has attracted several of the brightest young epidemiologists to various degrees of collaboration. I believe that these young people are equally bright and would have more relevant things to say about her qualifications than I. Thus I would strongly encourage you to contact them. If time is getting short, and I see that I'm delayed in my response, I am sure a telephone call would be helpful. These two young people know more about Barrett-Connor professionally than any one else. They are listed below with their addresses and phone numbers.

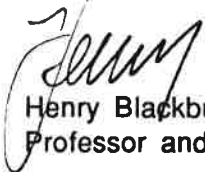
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Cordially,



Henry Blackburn, MD
Professor and Director

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